Lack of telephone facility to troops in Siachen

1076. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether soldiers in Siachen are facing difficulties on account of lack of adequate telephone facilities to keep them in touch with their families; and

(b) if so, the measures taken for immediate telephone facilities in Siachen for soldiers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) For the welfare of the troops in Siachen Glaciers, Army have arranged STD PCOs of Department of Telecommunications at the following places:—

(a)	Siachen	1
(b)	Chalunka Post	1
(c)	Thoise	1
(d)	Khalsar	1
(e)	Paratapur	3

Department of Telecommunications have subsidized the call charges applicable to all STD PCOs run by the Army in Leh, Nobra and Kargil Sectors which includes Siachen. As a result, only 25% of the actual charges are being paid by the users for all STD calls and ISD calls (to Nepal only).

With the existing arrangement there is no complaint from soldiers regarding communication facilities provided to them.

Status of AJT deal

1077. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a high level team consisting of IAF Officers constituted to examine the AJTs have rejected the same;